

REMARKS

In the September 23, 2004 Office Action, the specification was objected to and claims 1, 4-7, 11, 14-17, and 20 stood rejected in view of prior art, while claims 2, 3, 8-10, 12, 13, 18, and 19 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the September 23, 2004 Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification and claims 2-4, 7-9, 12-14, 17-20 as indicated above, and canceled claims 1 and 11. Claims 6, 10, and 16 have been further amended to correct the typographical errors. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 2-10 and 12-20 are pending, with claims 2 and 12 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Specification

On page 2 of the Office Action, the specification was objected to for typographical errors and failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.71 and §1.75(d)(1). In response, Applicant has amended the specification to correct the typographical errors. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his helpful suggestions. Applicant believes that the specification is now correct and complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and §1.75(d)(1). Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

On pages 2-3 of the Office Action, claims 1, 4, 7, 11, 14, 17, and 20 stood rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Patent Abstracts of Japanese Patent

Applicant Publication No. 11-220986 (“’986 patent”). In response, Applicant has canceled claims 1 and 11, and amended claims 4, 7, 14, 17, and 20 so as to depend from claims 2 and 12, which were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. As presented above, claims 2 and 12 have been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, Applicant believes that the rejections to claims 1 and 11 are now moot, and claims 4, 7, 14, 17, and 20 as now amended are allowable over the prior art of record.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

On pages 3-4 of the Office Action, claims 5, 6, 15, and 16 stood rejected over the ‘986 patent. In response, Applicant has amended claims 5, 6, 15, and 16 so as to depend from claims 2 and 12, which were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and are now rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 5, 6, 15, and 16 as now amended are allowable over the prior art of record.

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 4 of the Office Action, claims 2, 3, 8-10, 12, 13, 18, and 19 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. In response, Applicant has amended claims 2 and 12 to place them in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Also, Applicant has amended claims 3, 8-10, 13, 18, and 19 so as to depend from claims 2 and 12. Thus, claims 2, 3, 8-10, 12, 13, 18, and 19 are now in condition for allowance.

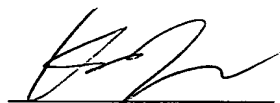
Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 2-10 and 12-20 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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